

Welcome to the Dancing for Busy People Blog

<http://blog.d4bp.com/wp>

Calvin Campbell

This blog is for people who want to dance or teach easy fun dances. If you are a **Community Dance Leader ... Square Dance Caller ... Round Dance Cuer ... Contra Dance Prompter ... Line Dance Teacher ... Recreation Leader ... School Teacher ... College Professor ... Church Activities Director ... Parent ... etc. ...** this blog is for you

It is a source of dances and information about all the various forms of dance that can be learned and enjoyed by people who really don't have any desire to take dance lessons. It's the place to learn about where these dances are described, where to find music that will fit the dance and teaching hints on how to teach the dance.

Are you looking for dances for children in grade K-4? We'll show you how to find them and what dances work the best.

Are you looking for dances that teenagers will like? You will be surprised at what a broad range of dances they will like.

Are you looking for dances that can be enjoyed by people in retirement communities? You will find sources for these as well?

Are you planning activities for a wedding or class reunion or a retreat? Yep! We can point you the right direction to fulfill your needs.

Maybe you and some friends are just looking for something to do that will get you off the couch and away from the TV. Community Dancing is the perfect choice. It's easy, it's fun, and it's good exercise.

Do you homeschool your children? Dancing is classified as a physical activity. Community Dancing will fill the physical education requirement.

Come read and look and learn. Welcome to "Dancing for Busy People."

What is a Beginner Dance Party?

Beginner Dance Parties are usually designed for people who have never danced or seldom dance. The people who attend these dance parties are not expected to know anything about dancing. All the dances are quick to teach and easy to learn. The dances can include line dances, dances done in big circles, dances done in facing lines, dances done in groups of three, square dances, etc.

Usually the choice of dances will depend on the mix of people at the party. If younger children are included then dances for them will be included. If the mix of

dances is primarily single people then many dances will be provided where people change partners frequently. If the party is held at a wedding they the mix of dancers will include something for all the ages of the people attending the wedding.

The objective of the party is to let the people dance as much as possible with as little instruction time as possible. The dances should require as little footwork as possible. Usually only the ability to walk is required. Even though many dances can be adapted to the abilities of people who may have difficulty walking or even be dancing in wheelchairs. Some dances can even be done while sitting on chairs. It's a fun way to move to music, meet people and enjoy time with friends.

Beginner Dance Parties are perfect for Social Events that include some activity where people are encouraged to join some physical activity. Music is normally prerecorded and the instructions for the dances are provided by the leader. This leader could be anyone from a professional hired to the event or by someone in the organization that is sponsoring the event. For tips on that see the book "[Teaching New Dancers](#)". That book is designed specifically for the first time dance leader.

What is a Community Dance?

Community Dances are dances that include numerous forms of dancing. This could include **Square Dances**, **Line Dances**, **Solo Dances**, **Contra Dances**, **Mixers**, **Trios**, **Sicilian Circles**, **Folk Dances**, **Children's Dances** and any other kind of dance form the leader(s) feel fit the mix of the people attending the dance.

Most community dances are held on a regular schedule. This could be once or twice a month or perhaps only once every couple of months. The people attending each dance are usually a mixture of people who have danced before at previous community dances and also people who are coming to the event for the first time. The sponsors could be an individual or a church, school, recreation department, senior center, etc.

All the dances that are used, are dances that can be quickly taught to the first-nighters and also enjoyed by the more experienced dancers. It is expected the the old-hands will help show the new dancers the routines and movements. Often, a short teaching period is scheduled ahead of the regular dance to show the new dancers a few "basics".

Most of the dances used at community dances require little or no knowledge of fancy footwork. If you can walk, you can dance. As the dancers gain experience over time, some dances using footwork may be included from time to time.

The music can either be prerecorded or supplied by live musicians. It depends on the venue and sometimes the availability of the leaders and musicians.

Many **Community Dances** are held with other social events.. Refreshments may be furnished. People may go out after the dance to visit at the local cafe.

Many **Community Dances** are designed for families. In the early part of the

evening, dances are done that include the children. In the later part of the evening, the dances will be more for youths and adults.

If you are a new leader, you need to read “[Teaching New Dancers](#)” first. This will give you an easy set of dances to start up a dance group. Once you have the dance group going, I suggest you consider reading “[Dancing for Busy People](#)”. This is a comprehensive book that will provide dances for as long as you wish to run your program.

What are Square Dances?



Square Dances are any dances done in the dance formation shown to the left. Normally, each pair would be a man (square) on the left and a lady (circle) on the right. Dancing with mixed genders (2 ladies) as partners is common. The red and blue pairs are also called the **Head Couples**. The green and yellow pairs are also called the **Side Couples**. The star is the caller or leader. The #1 pair is standing with their backs to the caller.

Instructions for the dance can be given to the numbered couples. Example: Couple/Pair #1 **Promenade outside the ring or inside the ring**.

Instructions can be given to Head or Side Couples/Pairs. Example: Head Couples/Pairs **Circle Left/Right**.

Instructions can be given to all four couple/pairs. Example: All Four Couples/Pairs **Forward & Back**. **Singing Calls** are dances to melodies where the dance routine is sung instead of the lyrics of the song.

What are Quadrilles?

Quadrilles are done in a square formation, but they are prompted like a contra dance. A quadrille usually includes a routine with four different partners. The music is usually played through four times. Quadrilles are much older in origin than Square Dancing. They have a history that goes back several hundred years. Modern Square Dancing is less than 100 years old and rapidly evolving.

What are Mixer Dances?

Mixers are designed to mix partners during the dance. The idea is to dance with many different partners. They can take many different forms.

One of the forms has partners facing each other and do a short dance routine. Then the individuals would scatter and find a different partner and repeat the same

dance routine. Dance movements might include **Circle L/R**, **DoSaDo**, **Arm Turns**, hand clapping routines, **Star L/R**, etc.

Many mixers organize the couples/pairs into a double circle as shown to the left. The same dance routine can be used as in the dances in a loose scattered format, but at the end of the dance routine moves each circle to the right or left one position so that everyone has a new partner.

In the diagram, the men/boys are in a circle facing out and the ladies/girls are in a outer circle facing in. In some dances, the positions will be reversed. In some dances, it doesn't matter who is on the inside or outside circles. Just pick a partner and form a double circle.

There are some Mixer Dances where pairs **Promenade** as Couples instead of forming double circles as shown in the diagram. Promenades move counterclockwise and the lady/girl is on the man's/boy's right hand side. In many dances the dance routine does not identify male and female parts. These are just the most common ways to mix partners.

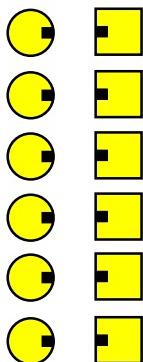
What are Line/Solo Dances?

The difference between a line dance and a solo dance is minor. In a line dance, the dancers organize themselves into side by side lines and all the lines usually face the same way. Country Western Line dances use this formation. Then the dance routine normally rotate the dancers one-quarter or one-half at the end of the dance routine. A one-quarter turn produces a four-wall dance. A one-half turn produces a two-wall dance.

Solo Dances can take many other forms. The **Bunny Hop** has people in a conga line. The **Hokey Pokey** often has the dancers standing in a large single circle. A **Snake Dance** has the dancers in a long crooked line like beads on a string. A lot of the modern solo dances are just a crowd of people facing the same way, doing a semi-organized dance routine. The Wobble is a good example of this kind of a solo dance.

The point is that line and solo dances are done by individuals. No partners are required. They usually involve some or a lot of footwork. They are done to a wide variety of music.

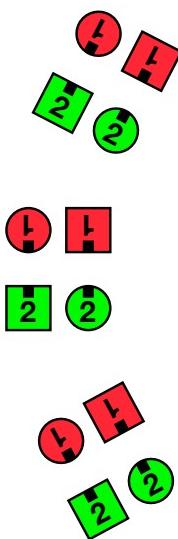
What are Contra Dances?



Contra Dances are dances done with people in facing lines. The simplest form is shown in the diagram to the left. The men are the squares and the ladies are the circles. The Star at the bottom of the diagram is the prompter or caller. The "Virginia Reel" is one example of a contra dance done this this formation. Contra dances can also be done with many other combinations of dancers.



What are Sicilian Circles?



Sicilian Circles are composed of groups of two facing pairs as shown in the diagram to the left. Imagine adding foursomes until there is a big circle of foursomes in what has been called a wagon spoke formation. This is a Sicilian Circle. In the drawing, the men/ boys are the squares. The ladies/girls are the circles. Each pair is facing another pair. There is a right hand person and a left hand person in each pair so a pair could be two females or two males. If the pair is male-female, the lady stands on the man's right hand side.

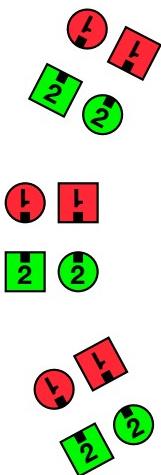
This is a very handy formation to use in both Beginner Dance Parties and Community Dancing. The leader/caller can call patter like the techniques used in square dancing or or the leader can prompt the dance routines. Both techniques have their advantages.

If the leader is calling like a square, then the dancers start moving as soon as they recognize the call. The calls used are any square dance basics that can be used with facing couples. At beginner dance parties, it is best to have couples move just one way around the circle either clockwise (green) or counterclockwise (red). Moving to a new couple is usually accomplished by a **Pass Thru** with the facing couple.

Sicilian Circles can also be called like singing calls or prompted like contra dances. The choice is up to the leader/caller.

What Are Trio Dances?

Trios are dances done in groups of three people standing side by side. In one formation all the dancers are facing counterclockwise around the hall as shown to the left.

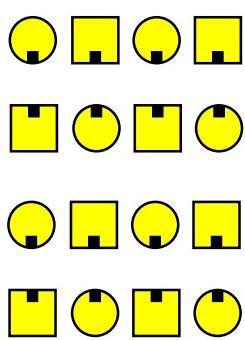


Directions are given to the inside dance, the center dancers or the outside dancers. This means the lines of three can be composed of any combination of males and females.

What Are Children's Dances?

For the purpose of this blog, Children's Dance will be dances that are designed for the age groups of K-5. The dances will be identified by the age range they are appropriate. This is done with the knowledge that dances like the **Birdie Dance** and the **Hokey Pokey** are often danced by even adults. The child's age when they are first learned will depend on the culture and the child.

What is a Mescolanza Dance?



The Mescolanza formation is shown to the left. The men/boys are the squares. The ladies/girls are the circles. Some dances can be done with any arrangement of men and women in lines of four facing lines of four. If there are enough people the sets of four couples can be stacked the full length of the dance hall.



The dance routines are done in the groups of four pairs or couples. At the end of each routine, time is allowed for the facing lines to Pass Thru and move on to the next line.

Sometimes the dance routine had everyone passing through two lines of four. When each line reaches the end of the hall at the head or the foot, the couples/pairs wheel around and wait until the action starts again.

